



THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HADDONFIELD

Volume 20, No. 2

May 1977

AT THE MAY MEETING . . . *SALTY TALES OF NEW JERSEY*

Since New Jersey is almost entirely surrounded by water—the Atlantic Ocean, Delaware Bay and the Delaware River—it is surprising that its maritime history has received only cursory notice. True, it does not have the tradition of the Gloucester fishing fleet, the Marblehead and Salem shipbuilders or New Bedford whaling, but New Jersey has its own rather unique place in the annals of seafaring. For a short time it was a whaling center; and on an almost deserted road near Cold Spring there are buried more descendants of *Mayflower* settlers than anywhere except Massachusetts. These are the men and women who followed the great whale schools in their southward migration.

Shallow draft, highly maneuverable vessels were converted in Jersey shipyards as privateers which wreaked incalculable damage to the cumbersome, sluggish British ships used to transport troops and supplies during the Revolution. The rivers and bays along the coast provided ideal cover from which to launch these destructive sorties.

When these activities ended, many Jersey seamen turned to more peaceful pursuits, one of which was gathering oysters from Delaware Bay. In towns such as Port Elizabeth, Dorchester, Mauricetown and Port Norris, a thriv-

ing business developed and with it, all the services needed to maintain the great oyster fleet—from shipbuilding and sail making to rope and rigging shops.

Today the fleet is gone, and the once bustling little towns are somnambulant.

Fortunately, Jersey's seafaring exploits have found a protector, a chronicler—in Donald H. Rolfs, founder of the Down Jersey Marine Historical Society. Becoming acquainted with some of the old captains who still lived in the oyster centers and listening to their colorful recollections, Rolfs realized that unless something was done to preserve these records, another chapter of Jersey history would end, and in all probability, disappear without leaving a trace. He

(Continued on Page 4)

SPRING MEETING

Date: Tuesday, May 17, 1977

Time: 8:00 p.m.

Place: Auditorium Borough Hall

Speaker: Donald H. Rolfs
President, Down
Jersey Marine
Historical Society

THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Spring is here!! And even more welcome than usual following the longest, whitest winter in recent memory.

To celebrate this delightful season the Woman's Committee has treated another area of Greenfield Hall to a "face-lifting." From the front door right up to the third floor, the vestibule and hallway have been redecorated. This dramatic improvement must be seen to be appreciated. The quiet elegance of the paper and the subtle shade of paint blend beautifully with the adjacent rooms and provide a perfect background for the tall-case clock and Sheraton card table in the first floor hall.

Once again, on behalf of the officers and trustees, I want to express our deepest appreciation to the fabulous Woman's Committee for all the generous gifts they have made to Greenfield Hall. The new screen door in the laundry room is still another bonus—all who use the kitchen will enjoy fresh air without flying insects—and all in time for the Village Fair!

It is a pleasure to report that only one vacancy remains among the Committee Chairmen—that of House Chairman. If any of our members would be willing to fill that post, he or she can be assured of hearty support.

Don't forget to drop in any Tuesday or Thursday between 2:00 and 4:00 P.M.; Greenfield Hall extends a warm welcome to all.

CAROLINE B. MOODY



A NEW EVENING GROUP

There is a growing number of members who cannot attend daytime meetings. Many work, and others have responsibilities at home, but all are interested in maintaining an active association with the Society.

Early in the year, the group began to meet one evening a month. Attendance has grown from five to fifteen or twenty at each monthly meeting. The group is beginning to develop a character and personality distinctly its own.

One of the attractive features of each meeting is the introduction of a guest speaker—Mrs. Robert Moore talked about the Society's valentine collection; Louis H. Goettelmann showed his slides of the moving of the Samuel Mickle (Hip Roof) House, Mrs. Charles Richardson showed her slides of English homes and gardens; and beginning in April, there will be a room-by-room tour of Greenfield Hall. Chairman Diane Snodgrass has programs planned well into 1978! For a pleasant evening in good company, join the Evening group.

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS COMPLETE—Almost

With the exception of the one committee vacancy mentioned in "The President's Letter," chairpersons for all Society committees have either been appointed or elected. Heading the Exhibits Committee is Mrs. David S. Lenhart; and Ms. Ruby Oberst agreed to take charge of the 1977 Candlelight Tour. In the Woman's Committee, Mrs. Joseph L. Grimm has been elected chairperson, and Mrs. B. Dexter Streeter will oversee the many activities of this year's Historic Village Fair.

HADDONFIELD AND HISTORY

Although today many people know Haddonfield only as the "staging area" for Count von Donop's troops before the ill-fated sortie against Fort Mercer, several events of more significance took place here.

The General Assembly met in Haddonfield in the spring and again in the fall of 1777. While in session, several important measures were adopted: In May, the Committee of Safety was formed, and the design for the State seal was approved; in June, iron workers were exempted from service in the militia; in July passports were issued to specified officials to travel freely, and in September, the constitution, adopted by the Third Provincial Congress on July 2, 1776, was amended to replace the word "colony" with the word "state." The adopting of the State seal and the formal declaration of New Jersey's being a state are the two events which the Haddonfield Bicentennial Committee plans to commemorate in 1977.

If history were a commodity which could be sorted, graded and stored, the records might be complete. But history is comprised of the records of the thoughts, aspirations, actions and accomplishments of men and women. Someone must write the record and provide for its safekeeping. Unfortunately, these written records contain enormous gaps, caused by loss, damage, carelessness or the desire for personal gain. Many of the irreplaceable New Jersey records were lost or destroyed through ignorance, carelessness or both; some were sold at auction; and others made their way illegally into private collections.

Today we are more knowledgeable, and there have been developed uniform ways to catalog such papers, methods for duplication of the documents, and above all, temperature-controlled, fireproof storage facilities.

However, important papers and en-

lightening memorabilia still are privately owned. The Historical Society has been extremely fortunate in that many of its members, recognizing the value to posterity of a continuous record, have made generous gifts of letters, pictures, cards or papers which will shed more light on recent or past events.

MRS. HAYDOCK RECORDS HISTORY

Overcoming what she calls "the jitters when *that thing* is turned on," Mrs. Haydock assembled all the notes and research papers she has collected over the years and recorded them on tape. Not only did she record for generations to come her own collection of remarkable memories and anecdotes, but she also persuaded Betty Lenhart to talk about the homes near the Clement-Hopkins family home on King's Highway, and Howard Griffith to share his colorful recollections of people and places on King's Highway from Haddon Avenue to Tanner Street.

IN MEMORIAM—

MARY BERGEN PENNYPACKER

Always history-conscious, Mrs. Pennypacker made over the years many gifts of "Haddonfieldiana"—ranging from post cards of Haddonfield "as it was," to papers, programs, pamphlets and books—all of which add immeasurably to the depth, variety and usefulness of the Society's manuscript material. In all matters relating to the Society, Mrs. Pennypacker was a true friend—she supported all the activities of the Woman's Committee; she placed on loan after the Society's purchase of Greenfield Hall furniture to fill the almost-empty rooms, and last year gave many of these furnishings as gifts. With Mrs. Pennypacker's death on April 7th, the Society—and in truth, Haddonfield—lost an esteemed friend.

Historical Society of Haddonfield
Haddonfield, New Jersey

Non-Profit Organization
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT No. 118
Haddonfield, N. J.

MR & MRS LOUIS MOUNTNEY
155 WAYNE AVE
HADDONFIELD NJ 08033

4

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HADDONFIELD

(Continued From Page 1)

began writing down the old tales, collecting photographs and whatever documents he could. The collection grew to include not only photographs, manifests, logs, journals and other documents, but also the schooner *Comorant* and its newest addition, the Chesapeake Bay oyster dredge the *Russell A. Wingate*.

Hear the story of our maritime heritage as only Donald H. Rolfs can tell it. Using material from old journals, illustrated with rare photographs and accented with authentic sea shanteys, Donald Rolfs has put together a salty yarn as entertaining as it is enlightening.

**SAMUEL MICKLE (Hip Roof)
HOUSE UPDATE**

At the last meeting of the Society's Board, the members voted to set in motion plans to begin actual work on the interior restoration.

True, funds to complete the entire renovation are not yet on hand. However, it was the consensus that to delay would only increase cost and reduce the possibility of continued active interest within the community.

Some imaginative plans to add to the available funds are being discussed now. An up-to-the-minute progress report will be made at the May meeting.

SALUTE—THE GARDEN STATE

The 1977 edition of the Historic Village Fair, sponsored by the Woman's

Committee, will have as its theme "New Jersey, the Garden State," featuring such symbols as its flag, its seal, its flower, its bird and its productive farms and orchards.

Focusing on gardens, a special Walking Tour of Gardens—on King's Highway, Potter Street and adjacent streets—is being arranged. Craftsmen will demonstrate some of the long-practiced and highly skilled techniques which contribute to Jersey's reputation as a center of industrial, as well as agricultural, versatility.

Mrs. B. Dexter Streeter, chairperson of the 1977 Historic Village Fair, notes "Although we're making changes, our Fair will have all of its familiar attractions—the auction, the luncheon, the white elephant, jewelry and baked goods tables."

Donations of books, bric-a-brac, crystal, china, jewelry, kitchen utensils, linens, lamps—anything in good workable/useable condition is welcome. A representative from the Woman's Committee will be at Greenfield Hall Tuesday and Thursday afternoons to acknowledge items given for sale or auction at the Fair.

The date of this year's Village Fair is Saturday, June 4th. The Woman's Committee extends to members, their guests and friends a hearty invitation to "Come, come to our Fair!"